

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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INFO AMCONSUL CACUTTA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 DACCA 2931

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR,BG,US

SUBJ: CALL ON PRIME MINISTER MANSOOR ALI

1. SUMMARY: I CALLED, AT MY REQUEST, ON PRIME MINISTER (AND BAKSAL SECRETARY-GENERAL) MANSOOR ALI TODAY (JUNE 13) TO ELICIT HIS VIEWS ON CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN BANGLADESH, NOTABLY THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NEW SINGLE PARTY AND THE GOVERNMENT, THE NATURE OF THE RESTRUCTURING OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION WHICH IS TO TAKE PLACE SOON, AND THE OUTLOOK FOR THE "COMPLUSORY COOPERATIVES." THE PRIME MINISTER MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE PARTY AND GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE AN INTERLOCKING, REFUSED RELATIONSHIP IN WHICH THE PARTY WOULD HAVE PRIMACY. LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE REDISTRICTING, HE SAID, WAS EXPECTED TO START IN TWO OR THREE MONTHS AND THE COMPULSORY COOPERATIVE" PROGRAM WOULD BE LAUNCHED IN 1976 WITH ESTABLISHMENT OF 100 INITIAL MODEL COOPERATIVES. END SUMMARY.

2. RELATIONS BETWEEN BAKSAL AND BDG -- ACCCOMPANIED BY POLITICAL COUNSELOR, I MET FOR FORTY MINUTES TODAY WITH MANSOOR ALI WHO RECEIVED US IN PARTICULARLY WARM AND EXPANSIVE ATMOSPHERE, PUNCTUATED WITH COMPLIMENTARY

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REFERENCES TO U.S. AID TO BANGLADESH. AFTER I HAD NOTED

I WAS IMPRESSED BY HIS HAVING ACCEPTED THE SECRETARY-GENERALSHIP MC BAKSAL WHILE STILL HOLDING A VARIETY OF KEY BDG PORTFOLIOS AND SERVING AS PRIME MINISTER, MANSOOR ALI ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE IS OVERWORKED. HE SAID THAT HE HOPES TO GIVE OVER SOME OF HIS PORTFOLIOS IN DUE COURSE BUT SHEIKH MUJIB HAS ASKED HIM TO CARRY ON AS HE IS FOR THE TIME BEING. (FYI: WE HEAR THAT A CABINET SHAKEUP IS IN THE OFFING). MANSOOR ALI THEN WENT ON TO STRESS THAT POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION IN BANGLADESH MUST INEVITABLY BE MELDED IF THE COUNTRY IS TO DEVELOP, AND THE DOUBLE CHARACTER OF HIS DUTIES REVEAL THIS. BAKSAL FUSES THE SOLE PARTY AND GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION, AND THIS IS NO WHERE BETTER DEMONSTRATED THAN IN THE CASE OF SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN WHO IS SIMULTANEOUSLY PRESIDENT OF BANGLADESH AND CHAIRMAN OF BAKSAL. HE SAID THAT HE PLANNED TO WORK ON HIS GOVERNMENT JOBS UNTIL ABOUT 4 P.M. EACH DAY AND THEN TURN TO HIS PARTY WORK FOR THE REST OF THE DAY AND

EVENING. HOWEVER, HIS PARTY AND GOVERNMENT WORK WAS SO CLOSELY INTERRELATED, HE ADDED, THAT IT WOULD OFTEN BE HARD TO MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THEM. TO MY QUESTION WHETHER IT WAS CORRECT THAT THE PARTY WOULD HAVE A SUPERVISORY ROLE OVER THE GOVERNMENT'S WORK, HE SAID THAT THIS WAS TRUE AND SAID THAT THE PARTY WOULD HAVE PRIMACY OVER THE GOVERNMENT.

3. LOCAL ADMINISTRATION -- MANSOOR ALI SAID THAT HE HISTORIC SEPARATION OF ADMINISTRATION AND POLITICS HAD SERVED BANGLADESH BADLY, AND HAD LED TO TENSIONS, DISAFFECTION, AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS. THE PEOPLE NEED TO FEEL THAT THEY HAVE A ROLE IN GOVERNMENT WHILE THE ADMINISTRATORS NEED THE DISCIPLINE WHICH THE UNIFICATION OF POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION CAN INSURE. THE EFFORT TO ASSOCIATE THE PEOPLE WITH ADMINISTRATION WILL IN DUE COURSE BE CLEARLY REVEALED IN THE OPERATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT. THE ADMINISTRUHION OF EACH DISTRICT WILL BE AIDED BY A "DISTRICT COUNCIL" WHICH WILL CONSIST OF (I) LOCAL BAKSAL LEADERS, (II) ADMINISTRATORS AND (III) "REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE". MOREOVER,

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THE SIZE OF THE DISTRICT WILL BE MADE MORE MANAGEABLE -- AND PLACED ON A MORE COMPREHENSIBLE SCALE -- BY TRANSFORMING THE PRESENT SUB-DIVISIONS INTO DISTRICTS. ROUGHLY 60 DISTRICTS WILL EMERGE FOLLOWING THE RE-STRUCTURING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND THIS WILL PROBABLY TAKE PLACE WITHIN TWO OR THREE MONTHS. (HE ADDED THAT SOME ASPECTS OF THE NEW DISTRICTS -- AND ALSO COMPULSORY COOPERATIVES -- WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE DISCUSSED IN THE

SESSION OF THE JATIYO SANGSAD DUE TO BEGIN ON JUNE 23.)
IN REPLY TO MY QUESTION, HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE
REDISTRICTING WOULD EVENTUALLY REQUIRE MORE ADMINISTRA-
TIVE CADRES BUT HE SAID THEY HOPED TO KEEP THE ADDI-
TIONS TO A MINIMUM.

4. COMPULSORY COOPERATIVES -- I ASKED THE PRIME
MINISTER TO COMMENT ON THE ROLE TO BE PLAYED BY THE
COMPULSORY COOPERATIVES PROPOSED BY SHEIKH MUJIB ON
MARCH 26 FOR EACH OF BANGLADESH'S 65,000 VILLAGES.
MANSOOR ALI SAID THAT THE FIRST 100 WILL BE ESTAB-
LISHED DURING THE YEAR 1976. THERE WILL BE ONE IN
EACH OF THE SIXTY NEW DISTRICTS AND THE REMAINING
FORTY WILL BE LOCATED AS APPROPRIATE. THE INITIAL
100 ARE INTENDED TO SERVE AS MODELS WHICH, IT IS
HOPED, WILL PROMPT THE READY ACCEPTANCE OF COOPERATIVES
BY THE BANGALEE FARMERS OVER THE ENSUING FOUR YEARS.
AFTER STRESSING THAT THE COOPERATIVES WILL NOT AFFECT
TITLE TO LAND, HE WENT ON TO EMPHASIZE THE AMOUNT OF
LAND LOST TO CULTIVATION UNDERTHE PRESENT SYSTEM
(THE RAISED, EARTHERN AISLES BETWEEN PLOTS COST
BANGLADESH CULTIVABLE LAND EQUIVALENT TO THE PRESNET
BORGRA DISTRICT, HE ASSERTED) AND THE NEED FOR A MORE
EFFECTIVE SYSTEM TO INSURE PROVISION OF CREDIT, SEED,
FERTILIZER AND OFF-SEASON EMPLOYMENT FOR CULTIVATORS.
BOTH OF THESE WILL BE MATERIALLY IMPROVED BY THE COOPERA-
TIVES. HE ADDED THAT THE EXISTENCE OF THE COOPERATIVES
WILL AID IN THE BDG'S GRAIN PROCUREMENT PROGRAM SINCE
THE COOPERATIVES WILL BE REQUIRED TO CONTRIBUTE A FIXED
PERCENTAGE OF EACH CROP IN RETURN FOR INPUTS SUPPLIED
BY GOVERNMENT.

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5. INTERNAL SECURITY AND EMERGENCY POWERS --

ASKED WHETHER THE POSSESSION OF EMERGENCY POWERS HAD AIDED BDG EFFORT TO IMPROVE INTERNAL SECURITY, MANSOOR ALI ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE ADOPTION OF THE EMERGENCY POWERS WAS A THOROUGH NECESSITY IF BANGLADESH IS TO PROGRESS AND DEVELOP.

HE SAID THAT THE

SENSE OF INSECURITY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

HAD MADE DEVELOPMENTAL EFFORTS VERY DIFFICULT.

MOREOVER, LABOR UNREST HAD SERIOUSLY REDUCED INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION. MANSOOR ALI STRESSED THAT THE POWERS WERE BEING USED VERY SPARINGLY, AND THEIR MERE EXISTENCE HAD BEEN CHASTENING. ASKED ABOUT THE SERIOUS SECURITY PROBLEMS IN THE KUSHTIA-JESSORE AREAS ABUTTING WEST BENGAL, THE HOME MINISTER CLAIMED THAT THE PROBLEM IS BEING BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL. THE BDG IS OFFERING AMNESTY TO THOSE WHO SURRENDER, AND THIS HAS BEEN MOST SUCCESSFUL.

6. SELF-HELP AND ASSISTANCE -- AS THE MEETING DREW TO A CLOSE, I COMPLIMENTED THE BDG ON THE SEVERAL ACTIONS IT HAS RECENTLY TAKEN IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD, PARTICULARLY DEVALUATION AND THE INCREASED EMPHASIS ON FAMILY PLANNING, AND SUMMARIZED SOMETHING OF OUR POSITION AT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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RECENT PARIS MEETING. MANSOOR ALI REPLIED BY POINTING OUT THE CONGRUENCE OF THE BDG'S ACTIONS WITH IMF PROPOSALS AND CLOSED BY EXPRESSING THE BDG'S APPRECIATION FOR AMERICAN ASSISTANCE.

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